

**Minutes of the
Subcommittee on Sedimentation Meeting
October 11, 2001, 1:00 - 6:00 pm
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 67, Rm. 581**

Participants:

Ted Yang, Chair, Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)
Jim Robinson, US Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC)
Matt Römken, USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
Larry Schmidt, USDA Forest Service (FS)
Bill Carey, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Chris Zabawa, Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water (EPA)
Mike Norris, US Geological Service (USGS)
Ming Tseng, US Army Corps of Engineers (COE) (by telephone for first portion)
Bill Jackson, National Park Service (NPS) (by telephone for first portion)

Guest/recorder:

Christi Young, Bureau of Reclamation

Action items have been included in bold, some deadlines have been included.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL FOR FISP

Ted Yang asked Mike Norris to open this discussion, Mike said that the USGS position was as stated in Bob Hirsch's memo that had been previously distributed. He commented that USGS would cover the costs of the move and that the estimated annual operating costs to FISP would be about \$20,000/year at the Hydraulic Instrumentation Facility (HIF). Christi Young questioned whether the move had to be all or nothing or can the shipping be moved to HIF and technical left at WES. Mike Norris commented and others agreed that there are advantages to having all of the FISP functions together. He also stated that the proposed move to HIF would be performed in stages.

Each representative was given an initial opportunity to comment on the assessment.

Ming Tseng stated that the COE opposes the move. They believe moving the FISP to HIF would decrease interaction with the COE personnel. He added that he is not sure if impacted COE FISP personnel would be willing to move. In the event the move takes place, the COE may pull out support of the FISP, further reducing interaction. He commented that the COE starting a new program that could potentially involve FISP and that having the project at WES would be beneficial for that work. Ming also commented on the uncertainty of the cost analysis and suggested that alternative ways to improve the operation of the project at the present location should also be considered (personnel change, something from a management standpoint, etc). He did not think that the decision should be based just on HIF being a cheaper place. Issues such as HIF not having the capability to produce waves to simulate coastal hydraulics need to be considered.

Chris Zabawa noted that purchasers of instruments are mainly the USGS and the COE, not very many states. He was assured by Mike Norris that all government agencies including state and

local agencies can currently purchase FISP equipment. Mike also added that the move to HIF could increase sales to states, although coordination with COE would favor keeping the FISP at WES. Mike also stated that FISP is getting closer to being able to sell to private companies. As for the proposal to move the FISP, EPA viewed the COE position favorably but Chris opted to refrain from giving his opinion until after hearing all of the agencies views.

Bill Carey opposed the move stating that there was no advantage to BLM in moving FISP and cautioned that the FISP may become a USGS project if moved to HIF. He further stated that BLM has benefited from the water quality sampler development, and he didn't believe that uprooting the project from its present location was the humanitarian thing to do.

Larry Schmidt favored a variation of relocation of the FISP, he would move the shipping and instrument management handling to HIF and the technical functions to the USBR laboratories in Lakewood, CO. He cited that USGS has a major part of their sediment research in Colorado. His second choice would be to move everything to HIF. He commented that a move to HIF would free up a lot of FISP staff time that is now spent on shipping and ordering—time that should be spent on research and development, gaining that time would benefit project. He added that there is never a good time to move and that the HIF location was also more accessible from a travel standpoint.

Ted Yang responded to Larry's suggestion to utilize USBR hydraulic laboratories stating that USBR would not provide space for the project free or at reduced costs. The project would be charged for space and it would likely be much higher than costs at HIF or WES, although he acknowledged the advantage of having FISP in a central location. Ted commented on the need for the Subcommittee to come to consensus on this issue and suggested that each representative consider all agency positions and what is the best solution for all agencies. Mike Norris added that what is best for the project must also be considered.

Matt Römken suggested that decision needed to be based on how the overall project is best served and how the subcommittee's interests are best served. There should be a longer term objective. He thought there could be potential to work out something to accommodate existing personnel. He stated that ARS opts for the move.

Jim Robinson abstained from voting and commented that being new on the block with no direct use of the facility, he had no purpose in making a decision at this time.

Ted Yang stated that for long-term development, location advantage, cost, and technical capability of HIF, his vote is to move FISP.

Bill Jackson stated that NPS is not actively involved with the FISP, but they do partner with USGS on sediment monitoring needs and would defer to their decision.

Ted Yang then asked each of the representatives to participate in a second round of discussion.

Mike Norris stated that USGS would pull this proposal off the table to avoid having COE pull out. He also questioned the decision-making process of the Subcommittee, wondering what the process was to determine if a motion passed or not (e.g., simple majority, 75 percent, or

consensus?) Christi Young asked whether or not the agencies that sponsor the FISP should be given more of a voice.

Ming Tseng commented that annually COE has contributed a considerable amount of funds. Ming cautioned that the strength of FISP reduced if it becomes a USGS project, strength comes from being an interagency project.

Ted Yang stated for the record that no one wants to see the FISP become an USGS project. Many agreed that being housed at HIF would not make the FISP anymore a USGS project than currently being housed at WES makes it a COE project. Ted commented that the FISP is currently made up of both COE and USGS employees, this does not exclude any other agencies from contributing employees to work on project. Matt Römken and Mike Norris suggested that detailed project staff did not necessarily need to move to wherever project is housed, analysis could be conducted at their own facilities.

Chris Zabawa, when pressed for an opinion, stated that he also believes that the problem could be resolved in other ways. His thoughts may be wrong in what is driving this, he is assuming that there are no qualms with the quality of what the FISP staff are doing. Mike Norris responded that USGS is concerned that there is not the correct expertise on the project to evaluate technologies that are evolving. Chris questioned if the lack of expertise in new technologies would be resolved by the move to HIF. Mike responded that there is a lot of other expertise at HIF that could support FISP, he added that the interaction with the WES staff is currently almost null. EPA deferred the decision to the major users/contributors.

Matt Römken commented on the need for a transition period and emphasized that the project needs to be dynamic to respond to dynamic nature of studies. Mike Norris agreed that idea was to have a transition period and to finalize the move after the current projects are fully developed and completed.

Jim Robinson recognized the advantage of staying at WES if the COE may be bringing people into the project in the near future because of their new project, if not he commented that HIF seems to have some advantages.

Ted Yang reiterated that no one wants to see the COE withdraw participation. He proposed having the subcommittee, and the WES staff with reservations on the move, travel to HIF and get their own first hand impressions on the move. If the decision is to move, he would propose that the subcommittee take Mike Norris' suggestion to complete the move in phases. Ted asked Mike to coordinate a tour of the HIF facility. Ted also stated that it was important to note that the HIF staff seems very eager to help the FISP.

Mike Norris took a poll of those who had been to the current facilities of FISP at WES and reiterated his concern about the COE reservations to the move. He would like to know how much are they relying on having the FISP staff at WES for the upcoming work that has been mentioned.

Ming Tseng suggested that people have the opportunity to visit both places and that the decision is deferred until the end of the year.

Mike Norris agreed to develop a list of pros and cons for the move, focusing on the benefit to the project. Ted Yang asked Mike Norris also to come up with cost comparison in addition to setting up a tour of HIF. The representatives seemed to think a January or February time frame for the HIF tour would work best. Ted stated that the minutes will show all of the discussion. He also reiterated that WES staff should be involved to let them see the opinions of other agencies.

PROSPECTUS

Ted Yang commented that the SOS should be in the position to foster collaboration, that the SOS should provide the vision and the Technical Committee provide the support needed to address identified issues. Christi Young pointed out that the function of the Technical Committee currently was to provide direction to the FISP and that only 5 of the agencies are represented. She proposed that all agencies on the subcommittee should contribute to addressing issues not just those that support FISP.

Larry Schmidt gave an example of how the Pacific Southwest Interagency Committee picks an issue to tackle from many issues, one person is selected to chair and the chair recruits people to help address the issue. The work group make-up is targeted to get experts in the particular field.

Mike Norris stated that he could not commit staff full time but could get some time from various experts as needed.

Chris Zabawa stated that the technical committee and the subcommittee should expand their horizons, EPA would like to have a forum that could review technical documents. EPA will have a need for some type of endorsement from federal agencies that their clean sediment criteria are realistic, defensible, and based on sound science in the near future. Clean Water Act federally mandates action from states and tribes.

Jim Robinson would like to see the Prospectus be a dynamic document changing to match the needs of the agencies and suggested that a statement should be added to that effect in the introduction. He further suggested that the document should be reviewed every 2 years. He wondered what was the distribution of the document. All agreed that the Prospectus should be included on the web page. Larry Schmidt added that the Prospectus should include a contact list.

Christi Young will incorporate comments and provide a revised version of the Prospectus.

Discussion on need for parentage for the Subcommittee

Ted Yang provided a quick review of the comments from the last meeting concerning the proposal to request inclusion of the subcommittee under the Advisory Committee on Water Information (ACWI). In the poll taken last spring the majority of the agencies were against joining ACWI. Representatives agreed that the subcommittee should not pursue inclusion under ACWI at this time and should maintain itself as a separate entity such as a work group. The group then discussed the possibility of eliminating "sub" from the group's name. General

consensus was to change the name of the Subcommittee on Sedimentation to the Federal Interagency Sedimentation Committee.

There was additional discussion on the need to document some of the group's procedures. It was agreed that the chair responsibilities should be rotated among the actively participating agencies and further agreed that the term for the chair should be 2 years to maintain continuity and allow enough time for the execution of long-term strategic planning. The group also agreed that the roster of participating agencies needed to be updated yearly. This roster will be added to the web page. Any agency that had not participated in a meeting for 2 years would be eliminated from the roster. It was also suggested that future meetings include the option to join the meeting via telephone to encourage increased participation from member agencies. **Mike Norris agreed to draft a MOU for signature of the subcommittee member agencies for participation in the proposed Federal Interagency Sedimentation Committee after receiving concurrence of the idea from the Associate Director of Water.**

Reservoir Sedimentation Information System (RESIS II) - Bob Stallard, USGS
The following comments were made with regard to Bob Stallard's presentation:

Matt Römken noted that the soil erodibility term was not being used per its definition. Land use erodibility may be a better terminology to use, it is a combination of the K and C factors used in the soil loss equation.

Chris Zabawa asked whether or not Bob Stallard was aware of the work Todd Dabolt, USGS, was conducting for EPA. That project includes the mapping of reservoir sediments and notation of sampling that has been conducted. Ted Yang commented that this is the type of communication needed on the issues.

Jim Robinson questioned the quality control of the data in the database. Christi Young said from initial tele-conferences between Jerry Bernard and Lyle Steffan, NCRS, and John Gray and Doug Glysson, USGS, that our assumption for future data and the existing data was that the quality control is the responsibility of the contributing agency. Each agency would be have certified their data prior to entering into the database.

Christi Young emphasized that maintenance of reservoir sedimentation data is listed in the Prospectus as a function of the SOS and that support of RESIS would be good way to continue and expand this function. A draft MOU specifically for the RESIS II project was distributed for review. Christi noted that the project would have higher costs for next 2 years to finish getting the database on-line and to incorporate the post 1985 reservoir sedimentation data. Annual costs for maintaining the database in subsequent years would be significantly lower. **Each agency representative was asked to review the draft MOU for the RESIS work and contact Christi, Jerry Bernard, or John Gray with their comments and whether or not their agency would be able to support the work by the end of November.** To date USGS has been sponsoring this work as a research project, USBR has provided \$14,000 in funding.

Turbidity Workshop

Mike Norris handed out a draft proposal for the Turbidity Workshop. Subcommittee agreed to support the turbidity workshop and agreed that the workshop should be expanded beyond turbidity to include surrogate methods. Excess funds from the conference budget will be used to defray some of the costs of this workshop. **Representatives should direct any additional comments on the draft should be to Doug Glysson, USGS by November 30, 2001.**

Open forum and closing

Christi Young asked whether or not the web site should be expanded to help foster communication. The web page could be used in lieu of publications such as the Sedimentation Notes and abbreviated meeting minutes could also be posted. Publication of the Sedimentation Notes is also mentioned in the Prospectus. **Representatives should check out the web site at <http://water.usgs.gov/wicp/sedmin.html> and provide Mike Norris with any feedback by the end of November on how to improve communications between meetings.** Christi Young mentioned that Jerry Bernard had recommended that interim tele-conferences, not exceeding 2 hours in length, would be beneficial.

The final item of discussion was the review of the two proposals submitted by USGS. In principle the committee endorses the two proposals, funding and how to do this is another subject. Chris Zabawa said that there are court orders out that require agencies to turn over sediment data on the areas of concern. He thought it would be beneficial to all if data could be coordinated. **Representatives should determine whether or not their agency would support or participate in work on either of these proposals (provide feedback to Mike Norris by the end of November), in addition to considering participation in the RESIS II work.**

Ted Yang commented that it was a good meeting and thanked each of the participants for their open-minded communication and willingness to focus on the issues and consider the needs of other agencies. He also expressed his appreciation for everyone's cooperation and help over the last two years. **The next meeting of the subcommittee will be conducted in conjunction with trip to HIF/WES in January or February 2002. Representatives from WES will be invited to attend the meeting. Ted Yang officially passed the duty of chairing the subcommittee (and a pen in lieu of a gavel) to Mike Norris, USGS.**